



Participants Learn Essential Survival Skills

Fresh snow and cold temperatures were the perfect ingredients to help assure the success of this year's Surratt Memorial Winter Survival Clinic.

Paul Green and Ralph Wilfong of Emergency Response International were led the 16-hour ground training and the overnight field survival sessions. This year, ten Rocky Mountain College aviation students were a strong presence among the participants.

Many people help to make this clinic a successful. Thanks go to Ron Mercer, Jeff Wadekamper and Kerry Johnson for the use of the Helena Regional Airport conference room for the classroom sessions. Ponder' Roses in Lincoln provided a hearty Sunday morning breakfast. Kudos to Cathy Murphy for her annual survival cookies (a welcome addition to the evening training). Abe Grosefield and the Lincoln Ranger District were great to allow the use of their land for the field session. Thank you to Max Murphy for his enthusiastic love of the overnight field session. Special thanks go to the Debbi Surratt-Meyer family for supporting this crucial survival clinic.



Max Murphy, aviation support officer for MDT Aeronautics Division, is pictured (front left) with aviation students from the Rocky Mountain College Aviation Department. The group is standing on the snow shelter to test the structural strength of the shelter.



Paul Green (l) and Ralph Wilfong (r) of the Emergency Response International present the ground school portion of the MDT Surratt Memorial Winter Survival Clinic. See more photos of Winter Survival on page 5.

Administrator's Column

Helena Secures United Express Service: Capitol city travelers will have another hub option and two more flights per day beginning June 5 when United Express begins service to Denver from the Helena Regional Airport. Flights are expected to leave Helena for Denver daily at 7:30 a.m. and 4:06 p.m., with flights arriving at 3:40 p.m. and 10:56 p.m. The schedules show time enroute of 1 hour and 40 minutes. The service will be performed by 50-seat regional jets operated by SkyWest Airlines, the same regional carrier that contracts with Delta for the local flights to Salt Lake City. The airport received a Small Community Air Service Grant from the USDOT. The grant includes funds to market the new and existing routes, together with a revenue guarantee for United in the event the airline's projected passenger counts fall short. The airport/community was successful in a very short period of time of generating the necessary match money required under the grant.

Silver State Helicopters Files Bankruptcy: On February 2, Silver State Helicopters ceased operations and filed a petition for Chapter 7 liquidation. The company was founded in 1999 in Henderson, Nev. and began operations in Butte at Bert Mooney Airport in December 2004 training students in two- and four- seat training helicopters. Late fall of 2007, Silver State transitioned its flight training to the Helena Regional Airport. In a statement the company said that the closure without warning was due to a "rapid, unprecedented downturn in the U.S. credit markets" which curtailed the availability of student loans for the company's students. The company websites were all removed by February 6. The abrupt closure presents a severe hardship to more than 50 Montana helicopter students in various stages of helicopter flight training.

President Submits Budget: President Bush recently delivered his budget request for federal fiscal year 2009 – almost identical to last year's proposal. This is bad news for aviation including a cut of \$765 million for the Airport Improvement Program (AIP), continued push to implement a "user fee" system to fund the Airport/Airway Trust Fund, large tax increases, no funding for the highly popular Small Community Air Service Development Program and on and on. This is just the first step in a long process. Congressional hearings will soon begin.

Merger Still on the Horizon: It appears that Delta and Northwest are inching closer to a combination that would create the nation's largest carrier. Delta's board of directors is expected to meet over the next several days. Delta has a growing presence across the Atlantic and a strong hub in Atlanta, home to the world's busiest airport. Northwest has strong routes across the Pacific and its main hub is in Minneapolis. One point of contention has been what Northwest CEO Doug Steenland's role would be at the combined company. It is unknown if issues like the combined company's name, its headquarters location and labor issues have been fully resolved. Delta also has been talking to Chicago-based United Airlines about a combination, and there have been reports that other carriers have been talking among themselves about possible deals.

406 ELT's Mandated In Canada? The Canadian Owners and Pilots Association (COPA) is warning pilots they should be concerned that revisions to a regulation's wording could mean mandatory installation of 406 ELTs in all Canadian and transient aircraft. Because the U.S. does not yet mandate 406 ELTs, thousands of U.S. aircraft will be banned from Canada posing a particular problem for aircraft transiting to and from Alaska. The next opportunity for comment will be when the draft regulation is publicly announced.



Montana and the Sky

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Calendar

February 16 – Young Eagle Flights for children and young adults ages 8 to 17. Helena Regional Airport from 9 a.m. to noon. Vetter Aviation, 3080 Airport Road. Registration forms must be signed by parent or guardian.

February 28 – March 1 – Montana Aviation Conference, Heritage Inn, Great Falls. For further information, phone (406) 444-2506 or email pkautz@mt.gov.

February 29 – March 1 – Montana Aircraft Mechanic Refresher & I.A. Renewal Seminar. Held in conjunction with Montana Aviation Conference, Heritage Inn, Great Falls. For further information, phone (406) 444-2506 or email mrogan@mt.gov.

March 15, 2008 – Rocky Mountain College Aviation Program Open House for prospective students and parents. 8:45 a.m. to noon. Call (406) 657-1060 to make reservations.

April 18-20 – Federation of Galaxy Explorers Aerospace Education Workshop for Teachers and Youth Program Leaders in Billings, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day. Participation is free and will be limited to 20 participants. Contact Steven Heffel at Montana@foge.org or (406) 652-7268 for information.

June 13 – 14 – Missouri Breaks Winifred (9S7) Fly In. June 13 - camp and cookout at Cow Creek Airstrip. June 14 - flying the Breaks and returning to Winifred for hamburgers and hangar talk. June 15 – Depart for home – fuel available. For more information, phone Ralph Rogers at (406) 462-5487

June 14 – Lewistown Airport Fly In breakfast. 7 a.m. – 12 p.m. For further information, phone Jerry Moline at (406) 350-3264.

announcements

The MDT Aeronautics Division will be making a new Montana Aeronautical Chart for Montana Pilots this year. Those who would like their airport added to the “2009 Aeronautical Chart” should be contacted Max Murphy at (406) 444-2506 or email mmurphy@mt.gov. He will send you a private use airport charting form so you can fill it out and submit your private airport to be included on the chart. All airports currently on the chart will be included on the map except those who contact Max to have their private airport removed from the chart.

* * * * *

The Hangar Café at the Hamilton Airport is open 7 a.m. to whenever. For further information, phone (406) 363-4317.

MDT attempts to provide accommodations for any known disability that may interfere with a person participating in any service, program or activity of the Department. Alternative accessible formats of this information will be provided upon request. For further information call (406) 444-6331 or TTY (406) 444-7696. MDT produces 2,400 copies of this public document at an estimated cost of 39 cents each, for a total cost of \$936. This includes \$565 for postage.

Plans Finalized for 2008 Conference

Conference plans are finalized and this year’s agenda is now available on the MDT website www.mdt.mt.gov/aviation/. If you haven’t already registered, complete the registration form on page 4 of this newsletter. By pre-registering you are eligible for a special drawing held on Thursday at the kick-off luncheon. You do not have to be present to win.

A spouse/guest tour has been set for Friday from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. This includes an historic tour of Great Falls. Enjoy a visit to many area attractions. Learn about world-renowned artists, Mother Nature’s breathtaking waterfalls and many of the earliest buildings in Great Falls.

On Friday afternoon, a static display will be at Holman Aviation. The display will include a North American AT6; Vultee BT-13A; Harmon Rocket; Lockheed T-33; Searey; North American T-28; and Bellanca Cruisemaster; Cirrus SR22 G3; and a Dehavilland Beaver. Participants will also enjoy a guided tour of Department of Homeland Security Customs Border Protection/ Air Marine Operations/MT Aviation Branch. Sit in the ski equipped UH-60 followed by a tour of Avmax Group Inc., a world-renowned maintenance and aviation support organization, and tour the Great Falls International Airport. Recent upgrades qualify Great Falls International as a Category III airport, the first of its kind in Montana and among only 57 across the U.S. The MPA Hospitality will be held in the Static Display area at Holman Aviation.

For further information on the conference, please contact Patty Kautz at (406) 444-2506 or email pkautz@mt.gov. We look forward to seeing you there!

Montana Aviation Conference 2008

February 28 – March 1

Best Western Heritage Inn

1700 Fox Farm Road, Great Falls

Mail Registration Form & Payment to:
MDT Aeronautics Division - Attn: Patty Kautz
PO Box 200507 - Helena, MT 59620-0507
Phone (406) 444-2506 – Fax (406) 444-2519
Email: pkautz@mt.gov

Names of Participant(s) (for badges): _____

Aviation Organization Affiliation: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State/Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail address _____

GENERAL REGISTRATION: AFTER FEBRUARY 1, 2008

Takeoff to Landing Package _____ @ \$130/PERSON \$ _____
(includes registration & all meals) _____ @ \$250/PERSON/SPOUSE \$ _____

-OR- Registration Fee _____ @ \$75/PERSON \$ _____
(includes registration & free meals – see note below) _____ @ \$140/FAMILY \$ _____

Thursday Luncheon _____ @ \$15/EACH \$ _____

Friday Luncheon _____ @ \$15/EACH \$ _____

**Friday Dinner/Entertainment _____ @ FREE \$ _____

**Saturday Luncheon _____ @ FREE \$ _____

Saturday Banquet _____ @ \$30 \$ _____

TOTAL PAYMENT: \$ _____

****PLEASE INDICATE IF YOU WILL ATTEND THE FREE FRIDAY DINNER/ENTERTAINMENT AND FREE SATURDAY LUNCHEON WITH NUMBER OF TICKETS REQUIRED. PERSON/SPOUSE AND FAMILY RATE INCLUDES 2 DINNER/ DANCE AND 2 SATURDAY LUNCH TICKETS – ADDITIONAL TICKETS MAY BE PURCHASED - \$30 DINNER/DANCE AND \$15 SATURDAY LUNCHEON. TO ASSURE ADEQUATE MEAL COUNT, IF NO INDICATION IS MADE AS TO NUMBER OF TICKETS REQUIRED NO TICKETS WILL BE RESERVED.**

Lodging Information

Rooms have been blocked at the Best Western Heritage Inn - 1700 Fox Farm Road, Great Falls, MT 59404. Please call (800) 548-8256 or (406) 761-1900 to make reservations - \$79 + tax.

Rooms have also been blocked at the following hotel within walking distance

Motel 6 – 2 Treasure State Drive, Great Falls, MT 59404 – (800) 362-4842 - \$60 + tax

Please reference MT Aviation when making reservations.

More Winter Survival...Fun?



Kal Kovatch, a new private pilot, from Seeley Lake spent the night in his shelter constructed of natural materials.

COULD



The hearty survivors from the 2008 MDT Surratt Memorial Winter Survival Clinic enjoy breakfast and a classroom debrief at Ponde' Roses Cafe in Lincoln.

Mechanics Seminar & IA Renewal Offered at Conference

The 2008 Mechanics Seminar and IA renewal will once again be held in conjunction with the Montana Aviation Conference in Great Falls. The dates for the conference are February 28 - March 1. The Mechanics Seminar will be held on Friday, February 29 and Saturday, March 1.

Six hours of training on Friday will be offered, and eight hours of training will be offered on Saturday. This works for those mechanics only wanting to attend on Saturday but still needing to update their IA for renewal.

Tentative speakers include, Teledyne Continental Motors – Loren Lemen; Colorado Classic Aircraft-Carol Leyner; Engine Components Inc.-Tim Morland; Goodyear Aviation Tires – Dick Delagrange; Rocky Mountain Aircraft – Mitch Steinberg; Precision Airmotive – Peter Nielson; American Bonanza Society - Neil Pobanz; Tempest - Vince Betchtel; Aircraft Technical Publishers – Fred Meis; RAPCO – Mike Lotzer and Helena FSDO

Mechanics attending this year's seminar will be required to register for the Aviation Conference. The registration fee is \$75 and includes all concurrent sessions, morning and afternoon coffee breaks with snacks, Friday night dinner and Saturday luncheon. If only attending the 8-hour Saturday session, a \$20 day pass is available. See the registration form on page 4 of the newsletter. For more information, contact Mike Rogan (406) 444-2506 or email mrogan@mt.gov. Make plans now to attend, to discuss and to learn the latest in aircraft maintenance.

How Airport Projects Are Funded

By: Jim Greil, Chief, Airports/Airways Bureau

What is the meaning of life? Is there life after death? Will the Chicago Cubs ever win another pennant? How are airports funded? For starters, all of these questions have one thing in common. They all seem to be equally complicated for most people. While I can't help you out much with the first two and since the Cubs haven't returned my 645th application to be a pitcher for them, maybe I can help out with the last one.

The reality of airport funding is that it is just as complex as just about any other type of government funded program. Although I can't impart all the rules, regulations, nuances and caveats here in a short article, perhaps I can help demystify some of the unknowns associated with airport funding.

Types of Airports – For the purpose of this article, we will assume we are talking about Montana airports only, although much of this article holds true for airports nationwide. Airports come in two basic flavors, public and private. Generally speaking, public airports are owned by a city, town, tribal council, county, airport authority, the state or the federal government. Private airports are simply those airports not owned by a government entity. To make things even simpler, privately owned airports are ineligible for most government assistance, so we will discuss them no further. Public airports can be further broken down into two basic categories, NPIAS and non-NPIAS. NPIAS (National Plan of Integrated Airport System) is the federal government's way of saying that either an airport is or is not eligible for federal airport funding. To become a NPIAS airport, the airport must meet certain benchmarks regarding state acceptance, numbers of based aircraft and service to a community and viability. Generally speaking, Montana has about 120 total public airports. Of those, approximately 70 (or most of the paved ones) meet the criteria to be included in the NPIAS. The bottom line is most of the "larger" airports in Montana (i.e. Billings, Lewistown, Thompson Falls) are NPIAS airports and are eligible for federal funding. Most of the "smaller" airports in Montana (i.e. Fairview, Winifred, Hot Springs) are not NPIAS and are ineligible for federal funding. It should be noted that the few federally owned airports (i.e. Schafer Meadows (USFS), Benchmark (USFS), Fort Smith (NPS)) are ineligible for most federal airport funds and must usually be funded directly from the operational budget of the agency that owns the airport.

Funding Sources – There are five main sources of airport funding avenues available for most airports -- federal, state, local, private and other.

Federal airport funding is derived from the Aviation Trust Fund. This trust fund was initially created by Title II of the "Airport and Airway Development Act" which was signed into law by Richard Nixon in 1970. In general, and especially for airports, all things to do with aviation in this country and paid for by excise taxes on aviation users is placed in the trust fund (i.e. passenger taxes, airline taxes, aviation fuel taxes, etc.). The trust fund supports many different aviation items, such as flight service stations, navigation facilities and small community air service subsidies, but more importantly, it also

funds a program called the Airway Improvement Program (AIP).

To better understand it, think of the allotted AIP monies from the trust fund as a pie with several uneven slices making up the whole. AIP money is divided into these "slices" which fund different items related to airports. These slices consist of different sized pots of money to fund specific types of airports and other airport related items, such as primary commercial service airport entitlements, non-primary commercial service airport entitlements, state apportionment, state system planning, discretionary funding, Alaskan airports, cargo, etc.

Montana's portion of AIP money is funneled into the state and administered by the Helena Federal Aviation Administration Airports District Office (HLN FAA ADO). The HLN ADO is responsible for overseeing and distributing this money to eligible airport sponsor applicants for qualified projects. Even though there is usually several million dollars available each year, there is also a large demand for this money and competition can be fierce. For larger airports like Billings and Missoula, their money is usually a little easier to come by since they are guaranteed rather large entitlements each year, however, they also have a lot larger appetite for monies due to their size and demand. Remember however, that only NPIAS airports are eligible to receive any of this federal funding. Federal AIP money requires the sponsor to add a 5 percent match for project funding, and because it is federal money, only specific projects that meet very stringent engineering, design and federal standards are eligible. These federally eligible airport projects tend to be big and are usually quite expensive.

State airport funding is not so complex. The MDT Aeronautics Division offers a loan and grant program for eligible airport sponsors. State grant money is derived from a 2 cent per gallon general aviation gas tax. State loan money is self generating from the payment of previous loans. Whereas the FAA requires an airport to be in the NPIAS, the only requirement that the Aeronautics Division has is that the airport be publicly owned and for public use. The grant program can fund up to 100 percent of any airport project that is also not using federal money, or can fund up to 50 percent of the sponsor's 5 percent share for any federally funded project.

The loan program can provide a loan for up to 100 percent of any sponsor's project cost over a ten year period at half the prime lending rate. Applications for loan and grant money are received by the Division once per year. Loan and grant awards are made by the nine-member Montana Aeronautics Board that is appointed by the governor. Unlike federally funded projects, there are no major engineering, design or standards to be met for state funding. Only the approval of the board is required. While the FAA usually has millions of dollars of Montana AIP money to distribute, the state usually has less than \$500,000.

continued page 7

How Airport Projects Are Funded, continued

Local airport funding varies wildly depending on the airport and the owner. Some airports generate large sums of money from activity at their airports, passenger facility charges, leases, taxes, etc. Smaller airports sometimes receive virtually no income from activities at their airport and have no viable airport related tax to help their income. Although the state might be able to grant an airport 100 percent of a total project cost, the FAA requires a 5 percent match, which means that some airports must devote a large chunk of local money to pull in that large FAA grant. It is extremely rare, except for some very small or unique airports that airports can rely solely on their own local funding without outside help to keep their airport viable.

Private funding assistance of public airports is just what it sounds like and is not as uncommon as you might think. There have been several instances, including a with our own state owned airports, of interested individuals contributing large sums of money to public use airports to protect or enhance their own aviation interests, or just to donate their money for a worthy community cause. Although this option can sometimes be very controversial, it be considered.

Other airport funding is usually not very common, but does appear from time-to-time. There is no definitive list of what “other” might consist of, however, some examples might be coal trust money, direct non-aviation oriented government budgets, special improvement taxes, foundation and endowment grants, military or DHS grants, etc.

Spending the Money – Larger federally funded airport projects in Montana, like runway overlays or new taxiways, usually are \$1 million dollar plus projects. These large projects usually take many years to plan, develop and secure federal funding. It is not uncommon to plan five or six years out for a project of this type. Engineering, design and administration contracts with private firms for these types of contracts can run into the hundreds of thousands of dollars. If, for example, an airport is anticipating a \$2 million runway rehab (not an uncommon project) it will require nearly \$2 million of federal money and nearly \$100,000 of local match money. Now it becomes obvious why local airport funding is so important for those “stuck in the middle” airport communities in Montana that are too big for the small grass airfield, but too small for the tax and airport revenue generation of their large counterparts. Small airports and small airport projects have the disadvantage of not being able to utilize that big pot of federal money, however, they have the clear advantage of not having to put up comply with the federal rules and regulations as well, which means that they can cut costs considerably and answer to no one but themselves when the project is completed.

In Closing - Gaining support and funding for your airport may seem daunting, but should not be intimidating. The Aeronautics Division is here to help. Please contact us for more information.

Students Help Astronauts Train to Live

Two high school students are helping astronauts train to live on the international space station.

The students are working with the HUNCH program to build hardware for the Marshall and Johnson space flight centers. Recently, Matt Wallila and Vanessa Peers were putting the finishing touches on electrical boxes that will be used in simulators at the centers.

HUNCH, which stands for High School Students United With NASA to Create Hardware, involves students at 12 schools in Texas, Alabama and Montana, said Stacy Hale, HUNCH project manager from Johnson Space Center. Laurel, Mont. is the program’s first long-distance participant, Hale said, and it has worked out great.

NASA provides materials, drawings and technical advice on how to build the hardware. The schools, in turn, teach students how to read the schematics and the skills to do the work, from stripping wire to bending metal.

Laurel kids started work in late December, and in March they received the components to put together the electrical systems.

“We’ll take these boxes, plug them into our facility and see if they work - that’s really the test,” Hale said.

Bob Zeek, an engineer at the Marshall Space Flight Center in Alabama, said the boxes are “the equation that gets all of the data out of the space station.” The boxes connect to equipment in the station that shows everything from power to waste gas levels and provides data and video links.

“It makes you want to be really careful, you know how important this is,” Peers said. Because the boxes have a sophisticated, three-phase electrical system, they will be tested before being put to use. “I’m just hoping I don’t fry any astronauts,” Wallila said and grinned. “(Hale) has assured me he will test them.”

Working with Laurel High teacher Florence Gould and the school’s Excel Program, the teens have spent at least an hour a school day on the project. Wallila, a sophomore, said he has spent 22 hours after school and about 20 school hours wrapping up the work. Katherine Keller was also involved in the early phases of the work.

Hale said the Laurel community has been more involved than other towns, from parents and Gould’s husband pitching in to local businesses providing services. Webber and Sons Inc. cut the aluminum for the boxes and made more precise cuts required

continued page 8

Students Help Astronauts Train to Live, continued...

by NASA, Gould said. Bosco Enterprises LLC completed the powder coating on the metal. Cenex Harvest States refinery loaned an engineer to work with the kids. Exxon gave \$150 and Laurel High School donated \$191 out of its pop fund to help purchase tools.

Comparing the prototype that NASA sent to Laurel with the kids' four finished boxes, there is little visual difference other than that some of the students' wires were long and had to be folded back. "But that won't affect or degrade the signal quality," Hale said. "I'm very encouraged, and I hope the students are just as encouraged as I am."

Peers, a senior, said she has enjoyed the combination of work and learning. Her pink-tipped fingernails were a stark contrast to the heavy black wires she stripped.

"It's just so hands-on, it's something you can really use when you go on to a real career," she said. "If I would've read this in a book, I would have had no clue."

That's the type of feedback NASA likes to hear, Hale said.

"The goal and objective with NASA is to help inspire the next generation of explorers," he said.

The International Space Station is a state-of-the-art laboratory that has been in orbit since 2000. The Expedition 11 space crew is currently on the station. The next expedition will depart later this year, on a Russian spacecraft, for a six-month mission. Science and technology for the station are provided by the United States, Canada, Japan, Russia, Brazil and 11 nations from the European Space Agency.

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Montana Department of Transportation

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